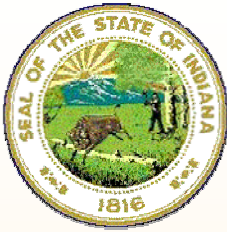


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Inside this issue . . .

Daylight Saving Time	2
Election law changes	2
Education issues	2
Economic development	3
Legislative initiatives	3
Easy access	4

Dear Friends:

The first regular session of the 114th Indiana General Assembly contained both accomplishments and disappointments for all Hoosiers. The most important issue considered this year was the establishment of a new state budget for the next two years. Contained in House Enrolled Act 1001, the \$24.3 billion appropriations plan will purportedly balance the state's budget without increasing any statewide taxes. However, the budget raises property taxes significantly and does not adequately fund education.

One reason I voted against this budget is because it cuts funding to 142 school corporations across the state, while it potentially raises local property taxes by as much as \$850 million and simultaneously places a freeze on state property tax relief.

Under the budget's new school funding formula, only one percent of additional funding is provided for schools in the first year of the biennium and 1.1 percent in the second. This is well short of the 2.75 percent schools will need to keep up with inflation and the costs associated with enrollment growth.

This budget and school funding formula will mean laying off thousands of teachers, larger class sizes, fewer opportunities for expanded curriculums and less of a chance for our public schools to cope with the burden of unfunded state and federal mandates that are continually placed on them.

The budget also fails to adequately fund state universities, which in turn will cause tuition costs to rise. It underfunds the projected growth in Medicaid costs and reduces funding dedicated to local communities for road improvements.

Although I was very disappointed with the outcome of the state budget, several important initiatives were enacted and are discussed inside this newsletter. If I can provide you with more information on issues considered by the legislature or assist you with problems or concerns you have relating to state government, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

What time is it ? Make your voice heard on DST

This year the General Assembly approved legislation requiring all of Indiana to observe Daylight Saving Time. This is the practice of setting clocks forward one hour ahead of the standard time at 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in April and moving the clock back an hour on the last Sunday in October.

However, it is the federal Department of Transportation that determines which parts of Indiana will be on Central Time (Chicago) or Eastern Time (New York).

The legislation approved by the General Assembly mandates the federal Department of Transportation to conduct public hearings in Indiana on this issue. Please watch for these hearings, and if you feel strongly about one time zone or the other, make your voice heard.

In the classroom

HEA 1001 includes a provision that changes the age cutoff date for kindergarten enrollment from July 1 to August 1. Beginning in 2006, children who are age five on or before August 1 will be able to enroll in kindergarten.

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, **SEA 200** provides that all students entering high school will

be required to take the Core 40 curriculum. This includes additional math and science classes that will be required course work to be admitted to a state-operated four-year college or university. Students would be allowed to opt out of Core 40

with parental permission and obtain a general diploma.

Maintaining a safe and productive environment in Indiana schools is addressed under **SEA 285**. The bill combats school violence and will help educators



identify and prevent bullying. This act legally defines bullying as repeated hostile acts over a period

of time, requires that all Indiana school corporations implement safe-school committees and provides statewide training opportunities to help teachers and administrators prevent and intervene in bullying situations.

At the polls

Changes to Indiana's election laws

Several changes were made to Indiana's election laws that will be in effect for the next election in May 2006.

More restrictions on absentee voting have been put in place under **SEA 15**. The bill provides that when applying for an absentee ballot, voters will have to state the specific reason for voting absentee and have a reasonable expectation of being unable to vote during the entire twelve hours the polls are open.

Under **SEA 483**, voters will now be required to show government-issued photo identification to be allowed to vote. If a voter cannot produce identification at the polls, they may vote a provisional ballot, which is a ballot that is set aside and may be counted as long as proper procedures are followed. To have the provisional ballot counted, the voter must appear

before the county election board before the Monday following the election and present proper identification. If the voter does not have an accepted photo ID because the voter is indigent, the voter can sign a document

attesting to this and have their ballot counted. However, if the voter does not provide the appropriate documentation to the county election board, the provisional ballot will not be accepted. The ID requirement is waived for nursing home residents who vote at a polling place within the nursing home.

SEA 483 also requires the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to provide a free ID card to an individual who does not have a drivers license and will be 18 years old by the next election. **HEA 1407** requires all full-service license branches to be open on the day before an election and on election day to issue drivers licenses and ID cards to ensure voters are able to obtain proper identification.

Under **SEA 419**, military and overseas voters will be able to email their ballots through a program being administered by the U.S. Department of Defense. These voters will also be able to submit a single application by fax that would serve as both voter registration and an absentee ballot application.

Valid identification includes a state issued drivers license, an ID card issued to those who do not drive, a passport or a military identification. No alternative forms of ID will be accepted.

Economic Development

Lawmakers spur economic development efforts

As we work to strengthen Indiana's economy and create new, good-paying jobs, much of the focus of this legislative session was directed at modernizing the state's economic development efforts.

One of the first actions taken by the General Assembly was passage of **HEA 1003** which created the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. This new public-private partnership replaces the Indiana Department of Commerce as the state's lead economic development agency and will provide the state with more flexibility in attracting and retaining business.

At the same time, several other new state agencies were created to support important aspects of the state's overall economic agenda including the Department of Tourism, the Department of Agriculture, the Office of Rural



Affairs and the Office of Community Development. Action was also taken to add new tools to the state's economic development toolbox. Among the many initiatives approved was legislation to allow counties to join forces to compete for economic development projects, the establishment of Global Commerce Centers to help Hoosier businesses better compete internationally, the streamlining of worker training pro-

grams, the expansion of several research and development tax credits as well as the reauthorization of various state and local job creation incentives.

Indiana is home to some of the largest insurance, pharmaceutical and manufacturing companies in the nation.

Broden's initiatives become law

Several of my key initiatives have been signed into law by the governor. A few of these include:

★ **SEA 444** attempts to curb Indiana's growing methamphetamine problem in several ways including making it more difficult for users to obtain the necessary ingredients to "cook" the drug. Beginning July 1, the act will restrict consumer access to ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, the active ingredients in cold medicines, which are necessary ingredients for the production of meth. In addition, the law prohibits those under 18 from purchasing cold medicines, requires customers to provide a photo ID and signature upon purchase and limits the amount of products consumers can purchase.

★ **SEA 615** strengthens Indiana's Community and Home Options to Institutional Care for the Elderly and Disabled (CHOICE) program. The act adds additional members and duties for the CHOICE board.

★ **SEA 422** clarifies Indiana's adoption laws and will reduce the possibility of adoptions being disrupted once they are finalized by courts in Indiana.

★ **SEA 304** provides tuition relief to the children and spouse of Indiana National Guard members who are killed on active duty. Qualified survivors would be exempt from payment of tuition and mandatory fees at a state educational institution. An individual's eligibility for the tuition exemption would be vested exclusively with the Indiana military department.

★ **SEA 525** requires certain repeat sex offenders to be sentenced to life imprisonment without parole.



Senator Broden debates legislation on the Senate Floor.



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 State Information TDD 800-743-3333
 Indiana Senate 800-382-9467
 Governor's Office 317-232-4567

Human Services

Adult Protective Services 800-992-6978
 Child Protective Services 800-562-2407
 Victim Assistance Hotline 800-258-0993
 Consumer Protection 800-382-5516
 No Call List 888-834-9969
 WorkOne St. Joseph County 574-237-9675

Community Action Agency

(Coordinates energy, housing & other assistance for low-income Hoosiers)

REAL Services, Inc. 800-552-2916

Area Agency on Aging

(Provides case management, information & referral services for persons who are aging or developmentally disabled)

REAL Services, Inc. 800-552-2916

Health

Senior Health Insurance Help 800-452-4800
 Long Term Care Complaints 800-246-8909
 Family Health Helpline 800-433-0746
 Medicaid Hotline 800-457-4584
 Medicare Hotline 800-633-4227

Online Services

BMV Express

www.in.gov/bmv/bmvexpress/

Assistance with prescription drugs

www.in.gov/fssa/hoosierx/

www.rxforindiana.org/

Search college grant and award information

www.in.gov/ssaci/

Get state forms

www.in.gov/icpr/webfile/formsdiv/catchoic.html

Business assistance

www.Biz.IN.gov

Get hunting, trapping and fishing licenses

www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/licensing/